

REMARKS ON "REVIEW OF THE GENUS *CACOMANTIS*
MÜLL."

BY GREGORY M. MATHEWS

ON p. 164 of Vol. XXXII of this journal Dr. Hartert says, "The genus *Cacomantis* . . . has received rather harsh treatment in the *Cat. B. Brit. Mus.*, and more recently by Mathews, who went entirely wrong about the nomenclature"; and finishes the paragraph by saying "much time had to be wasted in clearing up the nonnomenclature."

In my opinion Dr. Hartert's treatment is the harshest of all, and his nomenclature wrong; especially as on p. 174 he makes *pyrrhophanus* 1817 a subspecies of *cineraceus* 1827.

On p. 172, under *Cuculus rubricatus*, Hartert says that I told him that I no longer used this name. That is quite true, but I had already pointed this out in my *Birds of Australia*, vol. ix, p. 400 (May 22), 1922, well over three years ago.

I also drew his attention to Liechtenstein's name *Cuculus prionurus* 1823, which I had published in the *Austral. Av. Rec.*, vol. iv, p. 138, 1921 (Aug. 1), well over four years ago.

On p. 174 Hartert says that "Vieillot's description . . . would have suited *cineraceus* or *castaneiventris* much better."

With this I entirely disagree. Vieillot's description of *Cuculus pyrrhophanus* reads: "Il a toutes les parties inférieures rousses: la tête d'un cendré bleuâtre: le manteau, les ailes et les plumes de la queue de couleur brune . . ."

Cacomantis castaneiventris I described as "General colour above dark bluish slate colour, including the head, back, wings and tail . . ."; and the bird Dr. Hartert calls *cineraceus* as "General colour above slate-grey, including the crown of the head, ear-coverts, cheeks, back, scapulars and upper tail coverts."

Now I consider that Vieillot's description fits the bird that I figured and described in my *Birds of Australia*, vol. vii, p. 322, pl. 352, from Australia, and no other form.

As Vieillot describes the head as grey, the back and wings as brown, and the undersurface as russet, the description cannot be ignored, because he says "all" the undersurface russet, but the head to most people could easily include the whole head.

Dr. Hartert tells us (p. 174) that he had the type of *pyrrhophanus* sent over from Paris, and that it was the New Caledonian form of Fan-tailed Cuckoo. I wrote and told him that this was impossible, as the description did not agree. I then went to Paris and found that the bird sent to Tring was not now claimed as the type, according to the most recent books of the Museum. I then found that according to the Paris Museum authorities the type of *pyrrhophanus* was lost. The so-called type, according to their books at the Museum, is No. 1964 (old number) and in red 98 (new number), and the original entry reads "*C. sepulchralis* Müll. Java." This is scratched out, and "*Cacomantis pyrrhophanus* Type N. Caledonie Labillardier," written by some one after the books had been made up. Who wrote the statement that this bird was the type of *pyrrhophanus*

I do not know, but it is in my opinion not true, nor does the bird agree with the original description.

In the new Catalogue in Paris this bird is not called the type of *pyrrhophanus*, but on the base of the stand on which the mounted bird is placed is written "*pyrrhophanus* V. type," also "*pyrrholophus* V." However, it is in my opinion not the type of either name.

I believe my nomenclature of *Cacomantis pyrrhophanus* to be correct as well as that of *C. castaneiventris*. Now let us look at the Fan-tailed Cuckoo.

I have already dropped the name *rubricatus* for some years; the next name is *rufulus*. I am not satisfied that this does not fit the immature of the Fan-tailed Cuckoo only, and it cannot be mixed up with the Square-tailed Cuckoo. The immatures are so different, and as the type came from New South Wales we know to what form to look. Granted that there is some doubt, then the next name that I pointed out over four years ago must be used, viz. *prionurus* Licht.

We get thus my nomenclature, as used in my *Birds of Australia*, and corrected by me afterwards, as follows:

Cacomantis pyrrhophanus (Vieillot 1817), Sydney, New South Wales, and its subspecies.

Cacomantis castaneiventris (Gould 1867), Cape York, Queensland, and its subspecies.

Cacomantis prionurus (Lichtenstein 1823), Sydney, New South Wales, and subspecies (if *Cacomantis rufulus* (Vieillot 1817) be not admitted).

I cannot do better than end in the same way that my old friend did in the *Ibis* 1925, p. 749:

"It is true that I am busy enough with my own work, but I am always ready, if possible, to help a brother ornithologist."

Pucheran's action in 1852 cannot, in my opinion, alter the original description of Vieillot. I do not consider that Pucheran was handling the same bird that Vieillot had. Vieillot's original description fits the Australian bird.
